



State Senator

OCTOBER 14, 2005

VALDE GARCIA

Serving the 22nd District

Shiawassee-Livingston-southern Ingham counties

COFFEE BREAK NEWS

Legislation to be introduced to protect motorists' privacy

Legislation is being drafted in the Senate to help ease the privacy concerns of Michigan motorists from "black boxes" being installed in new vehicles. Black boxes are used to record speed, braking and seat belt usage within a vehicle. Also known as event data recorders, the devices also can track engine revolutions per minute and other information that can be used to understand why accidents occur. The proposed legislation would amend state law to prohibit discovery of information retained in event data recorders for use in civil proceedings, criminal proceedings and used to establish insurance rates. According to the Detroit News, about two-thirds of new vehicles, including those built by General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co., come equipped with event data recorders. "Black boxes" can continue to produce information even after a car has been totaled. Legislation will be introduced in the upcoming weeks.

Senate introduced amend to Michigan Vehicle Code

Senator Garcia introduced a bill this week that would amend the Michigan Vehicle Code to change the standards for obtaining a reduced registration rate for wheelchair bound drivers. The only change to the language of the statute as currently written will add "or Sport Utility Vehicle" after naming a van as a vehicle afforded the 50 percent registration reduction if certain accommodations are made. This will neither increase nor relax the specifications required before the driver can become eligible for the rate reduction; it simply allows an alternative type of vehicle to be used by the disabled individual.

Senate Introduced domestic violence lease termination act

Senator Garcia introduced a bill this week that would require rental agreements to provide a clause allowing for early termination of the lease without penalty should a tenant become a victim of domestic violence. In order for the tenant to lawfully terminate the contract the tenant must provide proof of domestic violence by either a police report reflecting violence, or a Personal Protection Order issued by the court. The legislation, appropriately introduced during Domestic Violence Awareness month is designed to allow a domestic violence victim to leave a dangerous location. The lease termination act aims to address the barrier that holds victims of domestic violence in their homes with no escape from their abuser due to a contractual lease agreement. A common method batters use to entrap their partners is to limit their access to financial resources. This bill would give victims a resource to brake through this barrier and escape the violence. Senate Bill 808 has been referred to Senate Judiciary committee.